

South West Observatory

Document publishing at the touch of a button



Saving time, costs and resources

Limehouse Software's web-based collaboration and publishing solution was selected to eliminate the need for external design resources and speed up the accessibility of reports. The proven solution delivered a rapid return on investment along with time and resource savings.

Coordinating information is at the core of the South West Observatory charter, a not-for-profit organisation funded by Central Government to observe and analyse regional demographics.

It collects, analyses and presents evidence to support policy making in the region. This requires the management of large amounts of qualitative and quantitative information from regional and central sources, and can involve up to 40 authors at any one time.

Limehouse Software was chosen for the 2006 refresh of a biannual report, 'State of the South West'. Previous issues with document version management and lack of design control in the production of the 2004 edition were the key motivators for a change in working. Limehouse Software presented a number of valuable benefits:

- **Version comparison** – ensures everyone is always working on the latest version whilst allowing simultaneous authoring
- **Time savings** – the ability to publish high-quality professional documents in multiple formats, including the web eliminated the manual process of converting Microsoft Word to web and the need for an external design agency
- **Stress reduction** – an easy-to-use and methodical approach to document production and publication with multiple authors
- **Cost savings** – external design budgets are cut and internal resources are reduced
- **Ultimate control** – an efficient in-house project management solution

"The version comparison capability of Limehouse Software's solution is fantastic," said Nick Chase, Research Intelligence Manager at South West Observatory. "This has resolved all the previous issues of emails flying around between the various authors. At any one time, only one version of the chapter or section is being worked on. This narrows any margin of error and is a much cleaner approach to document production.

"The software has already paid for itself in the production of the first document as it removed the need to use external designers. All the templates and other design considerations are within the software functionality – from here on, we're really going to start seeing cost savings."

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OBJECTIVE

To produce a complex statutory publication to a high-quality standard, on time and within budget.

CHALLENGE

To create a professional publication involving a large number of simultaneous authors and substantial quantities of complex data and maintaining design control in house.

SOLUTION

To implement Limehouse Software's web-based collaboration and publishing solution to improve accessibility to reports and reduce the need for external design support.

RESULTS

- A significantly superior document creation process with greater version control
- Publishing now remains in-house and is done at the touch of a button
- The software paid for itself in the production of the first document
- Conversion of Word documents to html reduced from 3 months to just seconds
- Dramatically improved accessibility of information through html publishing functionality



“The software has already paid for itself in the production of the first document.”



“We tested the software to its limits and it delivered on 95% of all aspects. Limehouse Software didn’t just hand over a piece of software and leave us to our own devices; it has been proactive on every query. I can safely say that it’s the best support I’ve ever received from a software company.”

Limehouse Software also creates time savings for document project teams as the need for external design management is removed. Constant ‘to-ing and fro-ing’ of amends, proofing and feedback between organisation and design agency is resigned to the past. The decision to publish remains in-house and can be done at the click of a button.

Nick Chase explains: “Previously, it took one person three months to convert the final Word document into a microsite where the report could be viewed and images downloaded. This really slowed down the accessibility of information. Limehouse Software facilitates this in seconds by publishing to HTML with the click of a button.

“Furthermore, the software is able to keep the report concise in design and structure. We reduced the report by 50 pages from the 2004 externally designed version.

“Publishing to HTML gives a ‘wow’ factor, plus the accessibility of information is invaluable. Any chart or table required to illustrate trends or statistics is automatically linked by the software to the source data via a URL link. So when published to HTML, any link can be clicked on to take the reader to the original source location or new data areas, for example the Office for National Statistics.”

Once the final document has been published, contents can be updated or revised online should the need arise. Information can also be easily extracted to make summary or update reports.

Limehouse Software provides a proactive partnership with its customers. Any queries are swiftly answered and technical issues rapidly resolved. Nick Chase expands: “We tested the software to its limits and it delivered on 95% of all aspects. Limehouse Software didn’t just hand over a piece of software and leave us to our own devices; it has been proactive on every query. I can safely say that it’s the best support I’ve ever received from a software company.”